

**Submission
No 106**

**INQUIRY INTO THE PROTECTIONS WITHIN THE VICTORIAN
PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

Name: Mr Tony Smith

Date Received: 31 January 2022

Inquiry into the protections within the Victorian Planning Framework

Mr Tony Smith

Organisation Name:

Your position or role:

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

Attached twelve pages are at best a seven day outline of what another 112 page nine month effort like our Kororoit Institute Ecosystems Decline submission might have produced given the time and resources. Would be more than happy to present more detail on any of this one that particularly interests the committee.

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1: [61f717e4f0ab9-TSSubmissionPart1.pdf](#)

File2: [61f717e4f33b8-TSSubmissionPart2.pdf](#)

File3:

Signature:

Tony Smith

Seizing the moment

My submission draws on eight years and counting membership of the City of Brimbank's Heritage Advisory Committee and a longer involvement with the Western Metropolitan Region Group of Historical Societies.

Reflecting on the lack of visible interest in this inquiry a week out from the submission deadline, my submission also aims to challenge the Environment and Planning Committee to build on what you and we have learnt re waste streams and ecosystems to make recommendations which may appear politically impossible but are needed to regain world leadership.



HAC @ Albion Silos 7 September 2015



HAC @ Sunshine Silos 17 May 2021



Planned extent of Brimbank Park adjacent to ecologically significant 1920s Solomon Heights estate & 21.5 ha 71 Penna Avenue. It was also planned to connect to Green Gully below road bridge rather than embankment.

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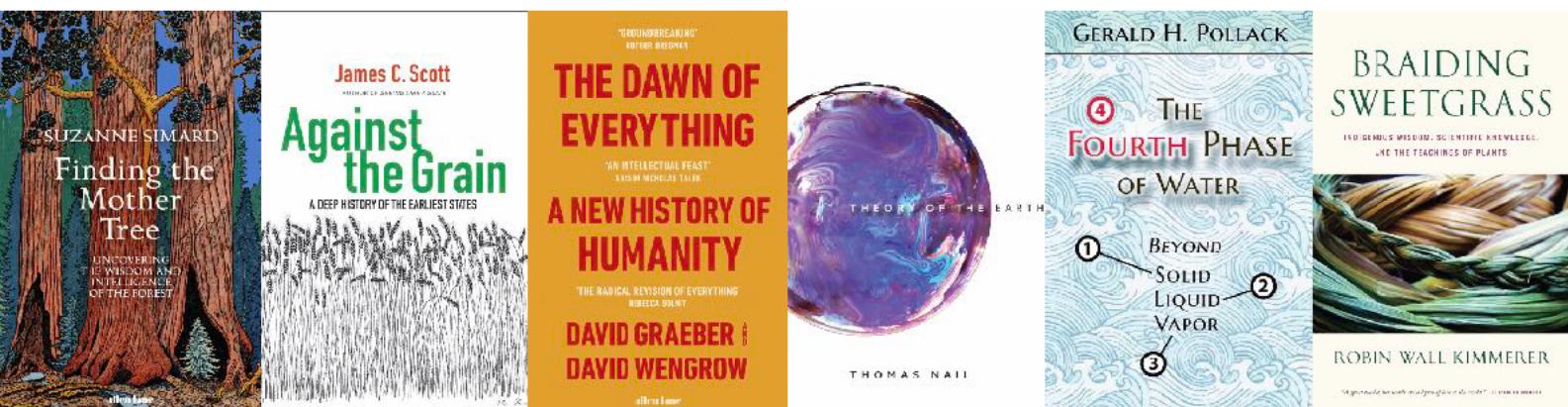
Stony Creek fire water flood

I was introduced to your committee by attending your public hearings on 6 August 2019 starting with Anti-Toxic Waste Alliance and ending with Friends of Stony Creek. I remain active with both those groups.

That prompted me to lead the preparation of Kororoit Institute's submission to your inquiry into Ecosystems Decline, the development of which provided key background to the points I will try to make here, taking into account the floodgates of additional learning that process opened and the particular relevance of other aspects of my community roles to this inquiry.



First of quite a few visits to Cruickshank Park late in the day after the fire suggested the best available pumps would struggle to have an impact on the flow of water from the fire hoses, let alone the contaminants that flow washed out of the burning warehouse.



Some recent reading which situates our colonial presumptions and excesses in the deeper contexts that will be needed to start to deal with the existential crises our “she'll be right” assumption is allowing to pile up.

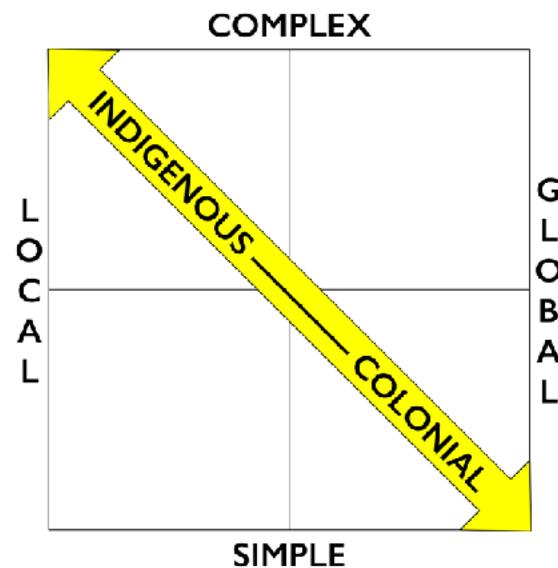
Whose home is it anyway?

Common concerns about housing invoke unsupportable assumptions about the priority of the colonial occupation, not just over the indigenous population but also all the other life forms which are similarly at home here.

I'm increasingly observant not just of the deep commonalities we share with those our culture still sees as "other", while indigenous cultures worldwide recognise as family, but also of the innovative uses those others make of many works we litter the world with, not just the few where we are actually trying to help. It often seems they know us better than we know them.



The timely release of this biblical masterpiece has expanded awareness of indigenous knowledges.



Faux standardisation goes against all we know about local complexity.



Rainbow Lorikeets far from only birds to use infrastructure to regather their community.

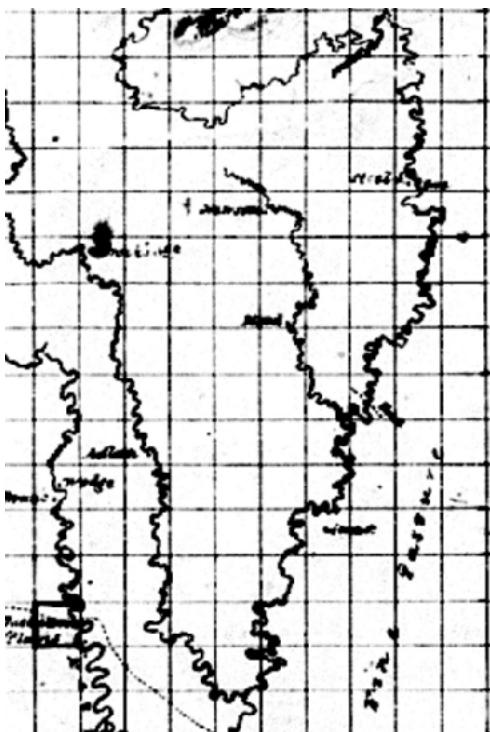
Grandfathered planning approvals let Pace overexploit Maribyrnong Valley escarpment.

Housing as value store

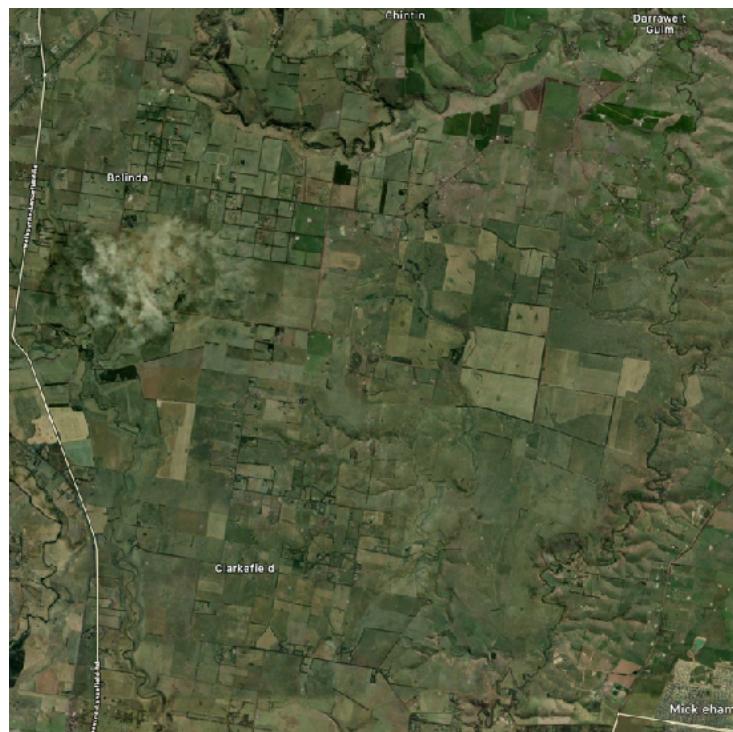
Freehold title and other politically created fundamentals of our financial system impose two major impediments to the provision of reasonable housing for even humans.

Reliance on market interactions to determine price creates a bias which favours the interests of those with the most money as they can bid up things they want to be seen to be particularly valuable, of particular relevance the use of commodified housing as a value store, some doing so without even the bother of collecting rent.

And the only “qualification” to be a property developer is to have access to money, the skills for which are far removed from those that might conceive better housing solutions.



Surveyor Robert Hoddle's 1840 map choice of graph paper orientation and scale



casts a significant shadow on property boundaries and road alignments across the Maribyrnong catchment and around Melbourne.



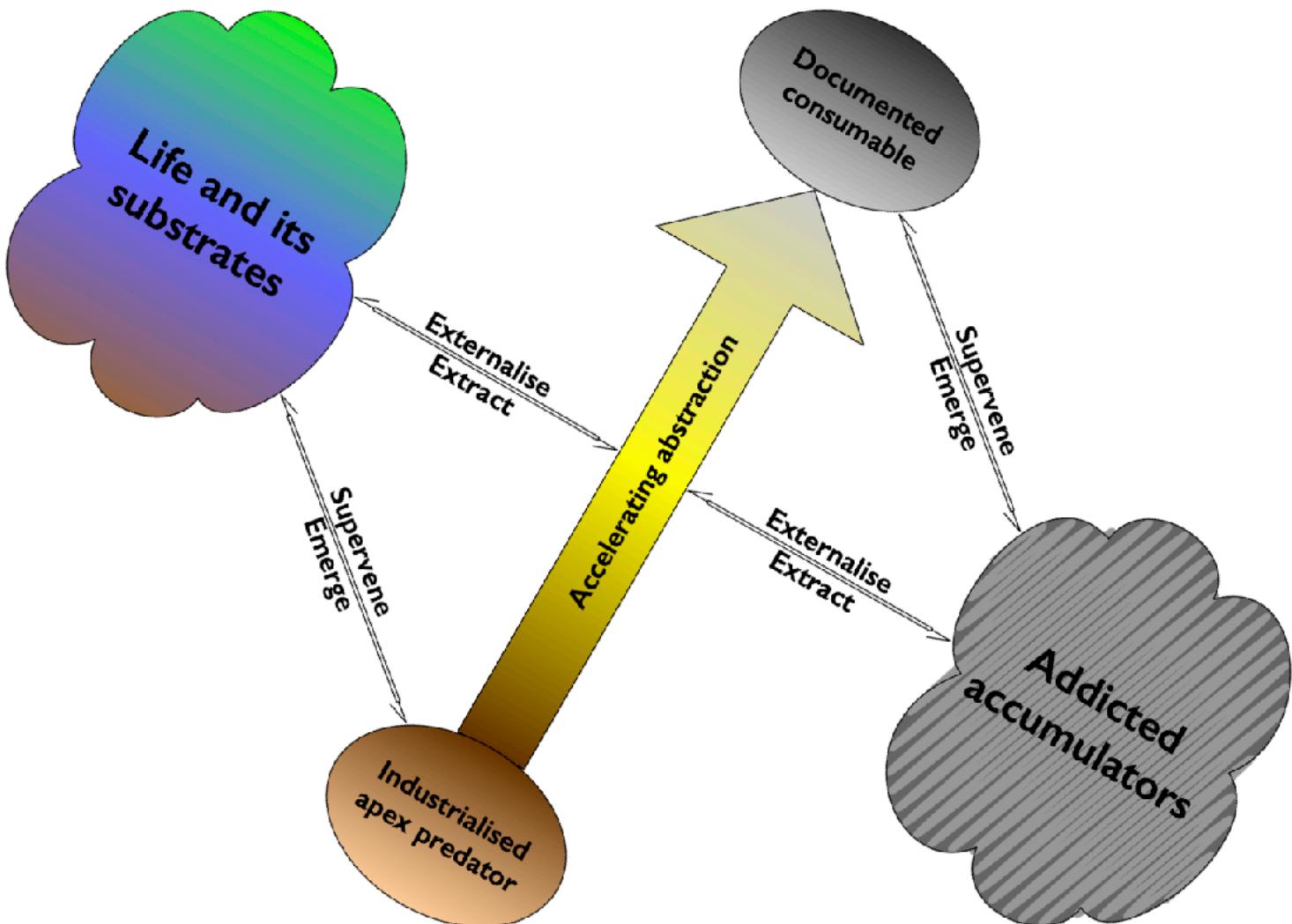
Deep Creek circling Lancefield to the north is a vital part of the Maribyrnong catchment

Extantion, not extinction

The Sustainable Development oxymoron needs to be put to rest because of its absurd implication that Life's ever changing dynamics are pursuing some utopian fantasy, such as common expectations for human housing.

Glenn A Albrecht defines 'Extantion'¹ as "A state of ongoing existence in life" while expounding a framework which takes proper account of current scientific understanding of the fundamental role of symbiosis in ongoing adaptation to change, an understanding which invalidates legal assumptions about human autonomy.

¹ <https://glennaalbrecht.wordpress.com/2021/03/19/the-extinction-of-rights-and-the-extantion-of-ghehds-2/>



Having outsourced our way to being the globalised apex predator, we abstracted ourselves from the rest of nature to focus on a shadow existence as deeply documented consumable fodder for voracious legal fictions

Diversity doesn't commodify

Staying on 14 years in a convenient enough house inherited after being my mother's carer left me with responsibility for the legacy of St Albans History Society while similar standard house blocks all around turn into multi unit developments and my trees increasingly feed the ecosystem.

Commodification and marketability of housing stock cannot match the changing wants and needs of fracturing households nor the individuals they spit out, yet our governments have bet the house on continuing growth and job generation, including ever more dubious industries which tackle the intractable fallout, from real estate and waste disposal to transportation and storage.



27 November 2021 opening of restored prefabricated police hut originally imported and used locally during the gold rush. It is colocated with Keilor's historic Harrick's Cottage after persistent efforts of Keilor Historical Society and Brimbank's heritage advisor.



Sydenham Park is a major conservation reserve where the confluence of Deep and Jacksons Creeks forms the Maribyrnong, protected by Green Wedge and Melbourne Airport overlays, work ongoing towards restoration and potential reuse of homestead.

Increasing permeability

Life is a significant component of this planet's systems for water circulation, so I've come to refer to the products of engineering obsessions with containing other flows as "suburban sclerosis".

Setting maximum heights and minimum areas is anything but a recipe for meeting the increasing diversity of housing needs, let alone encouraging experimentation in directions that market forces will never lead.

Instead of 4-6 apartments on standard house blocks, small footprint towers could allow much greater permeability, serious revegetation and urban forest contributions.



With climate change increasing flood risk even in 100% natural catchments, the importance of permeability and water retention continues to increase. Photo of my evacuation 5 January 2022 courtesy fellow camper Mary Hogarth.



When naturalisation project budgets fail to account for hitting historic contamination, engineers fall back to amplifying sclerosis. Upper Stony Creek Transformation Project.



Cumberland River drains much of the main Otway ridge.



October flood dropped its weapons (road repair material post January 2021 flood) where flow calmed below culvert.

Minding Maribyrnong Green Wedge

On the back of significant planning interventions for Friends of Maribyrnong Valley, I took on the vacant role of representing the closest Green Wedge to the GPO at the Green Wedges Coalition, learning of the strength of the concept and its vulnerability to erosion, a problem amplified on the Victorian Volcanic Plains grasslands by widespread ecological ignorance.

While the primary purpose of the Planning regime is facilitating development, surviving ecological and topographic assets that are proposed to be protected under Waterways of the West face pressures which adversarial processes place unfair demands on volunteers to defend.



Friends of Maribyrnong Valley volunteers at end of tree planting at Caroline Chisholm Reserve, Keilor, adjacent to market garden properties of the innermost Green Wedge.



Mountains of waste facing Sunbury Road just past Melbourne Airport underline how disconnected our industrial processes have become from the fundamental needs of Life.

Loss of scale of industrial heritage

I've been participating in Orica Deer Park site's quarterly Community Meetings since 2010 as they rehabilitate the eastern half of the vast site preparatory to releasing it for less toxic non-residential subdivision.

Now aware of the fractious histories of numerous vast industrial/military sites across Melbourne's West down to the minuscule heritage preservation efforts for the likes of Cairnlea's Black Powder Mill, I am ever more concerned at the combination of the lack of public appreciation of the scale of these places and lack of awareness of the toxic hazards buried largely unrecorded.



Soon demolished White House was the oldest building on Orica's Deer Park site in 2015.



The Commonwealth's Albion Explosive Factory became the suburb of Cairnlea and more, with the Black Powder Mill's annual open days the only reminder.



Reenactment hobbyists from the other side of town provide a demonstration of old weapons which attracts passers by along attractive Kororoit Creek trail.

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Enforcement is a lost cause

The great deterrent to continuing in my many voluntary roles is the chorus calling on “them” (some authority) “to do something” (increase regulation, penalties and enforcement) when 75 years lived experience make it clear that never works.

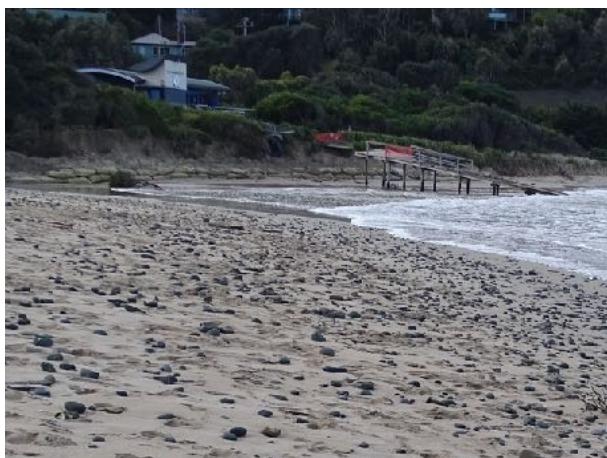
It can be particularly frustrating that at this time of escalating uncertainty, both from the flood of new knowledge and the ever greater exploitation of system vulnerabilities, that so many retreat to imagined certainties and escalate their defence of what never really was or never reasonably could be. I’ve long advocated “No secrets, and no need for secrets” facilitated by the transparency that the online information technologies can offer, technologies I’ve been working on personally since the start of the 1980s.



Anna Lanigan spotted nest-building magpie pausing to assess what to do with his work in progress destroyed.



VicPol aiding and abetting murder of iconic 130 year old Lemon-scented Gum in the heart of Melbourne Gateway.



Heavy duty sand bagging underway 1 July 2021 to protect Wye River Surf Life Saving Club from the river and surf.



Christmas Eve 2021, ParksVic upped the ante with cross beams, which were soon gone, but parking area closure stayed.

Accelerating sea level rise

Diving off the rocks from Lorne to beyond Apollo Bay required close attention to tide heights at numerous locations and makes it clear that sea level is not just rising but the rate of rise is accelerating, something the science makes clear is already locked in.

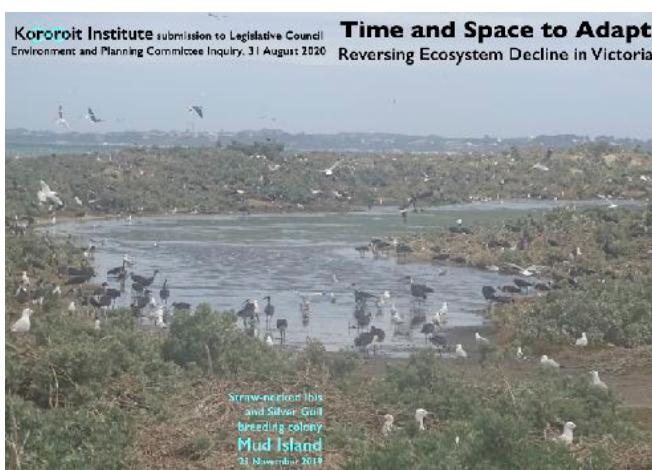
Learning of Holdgate et al's 2011 finding that Port Phillip Bay was cut off from Bass Strait and dried out until Nepean Bay Bar was breached a thousand years ago led me to investigate the possibility of reinstating the natural barrier as a foundation for a transport-carrying embankment that could protect Melbourne and Geelong from the first 20 metres, buying significant time to reclaim a position of world leadership.



<https://www.slideshare.net/ynotds/nepean-bay-bar>



<https://www.slideshare.net/ynotds/nepean-bay-bar-update>



Import of life experience of environmental carers made clear need to visit Mud Island, only managed three times in my 73rd year, learning of 50,000 nest Straw-necked Ibis colony founded 1990 requiring commuting to grasslands on surrounding peninsulas.



Straw-necked and White Ibis visiting Gladstone Street wetland, St Albans.

Recommendation: Look up a level

Forty years seeing the world through a complex systems lens has taught me that the worst problems are rarely what they appear to be, but are hidden behind common misassumptions about the workings of the containing level.

This means that our compounding ecological, climate and social emergencies cannot be overcome from within the prevailing political economy, especially its reliance on land ownership and unlimited accumulation. While I'm far from a lone voice on this, unequal access impedes development of a detailed position, most likely a good thing given the essential roles of synergy and experimentation in working with complex adaptive systems.

Looking at sprawling American cities long made it clear that the game changes when a city passes four million people, requiring adjustments our road lobby continues to resist.



Recommendation:
Planning Framework adopts
open and transparent collaboration,
abandoning confidentiality and
adversarial processes.

Wave refraction, Cumberland River beach, 7 January 2019.